

**Pst. Oghenethoja Umuteme** *MSc MDiv ThD*

# Fruitful Vine



***A Study Devotional***





# Spending Time with God

Time	Description	Action
5:00am - 5:30am	Praising His awesomeness in the cool of the morning breeze and Dedicating of the day's activity. You may decide to do it outside to feel the cool morning breeze	Prayer/Praise
9:00am-9:05am	Read a Psalm of praise back to Him. Tell Him what you feel for Him in adoration and total submission	Praise
12:00noon - 12:30pm	It is noontime – half of the workday is gone. Tell Him thank you for allowing you cross over to the other half of the workday. Thank Him for all that transpired while you worked	Prayer/Praise
4:00pm- 4:05pm	Read another Psalms of Praise	Praise
6:00pm - 6:30pm	Thank Him for the day. You are probably now at home. Call the family together or a neighbour and worship Him together	Prayer/Praise
9:00pm - 9:05pm	Read a Psalms of praise after which you should take a rest while reading your bible and meditating	Praise
11:55pm - 12:30am	Thank Him for allowing you to see a new day and take control of the new day	Prayer/Praise

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ISBN: 978-179-658-957-3

Imprint: Independently Published by Restoration Media House

Unless otherwise indicated, Bible quotations are taken from the King James Version and New King James Version of the Holy Bible. Scripture quotations marked with ESV are taken from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version.

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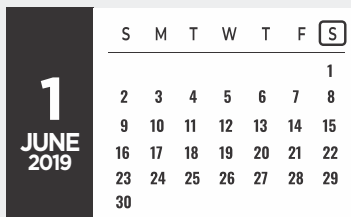


# Preface

June is here. This month is the sixth of the twelve months that makes a year. It is an important month, because it is a month when many consider how far they have progressed this year. Not to worry! You are not in a competition of any sort with anybody. Your glory is not determined by the months of the year, but by your fervent walk with the Lord. Like Paul said in Romans 8:18 - For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. The glory ahead, which is the reward for those who submitted to God's will (Hebrew 11:6), is worth labouring for. I present to you, a devotional that points us to the saving grace of God throughout this month. I have followed the spirit of earlier editions and have equally provided detailed explanations of each daily topic with a mindset of helping the reader understand that our stand in faith, is determined by how well we walk with the Lord, in sanctity and purity of our mind. It is my candid prayer that this devotional will open your understanding to the call of faith and the reward thereto. I can assure you that your labour and service in the vineyard shall be rewarded soon by the Lord through His angels. Let this mind therefore be in us – the mind of enduring the slow tick of the clock of patience, that we may be able to appreciate the glory that the Lord has kept ahead of us. Gently, and gently – we will walk in, and be crowned with a crown of righteousness which only our Lord will bestow upon our heads. Shalom!

## **Pastor Oghenethoja Umuteme**

BTech (Mar. Engrg); MSc (Oil & Gas Engrg);  
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MTh (Theology); M.Div. (Divinity);  
Th.D. (Theology); PhD (Engrg – in view)



# A Heart Burning with Conscience

*And they said one to another, “did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way; and while he opened to us the scriptures?” Luke 24:32*



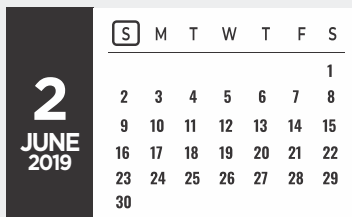
We are directed towards good works in our Christian call through our conscience. What then is conscience? The Cambridge online dictionary defines conscience as, “the part of you that judges how moral your own actions are and makes you feel guilty about bad things that you have done...” That part of us that comes alive so we can do good is inputted through the spirit of Christ. How many Christians have a conscience that is alive? Now, let's look at the anchor verse. Reading from verse 13, Jesus met two young men who discussed along the way of how the resurrection of the Lord could have been faked (verse 23-24). While in their midst, He made them to realise that their inability to understand the prophecies concerning the coming and glorification of the messiah was responsible for their confused mindset toward His resurrection. When He had left them, that was when they realised Christ was the one talking with them. If we take a look at verse 25, Jesus referred to those who did not believed His resurrections as, “... fools, and slow of heart to believe...” What I will call – “dullards and novices in spiritual matters.” As expressed in the anchor verse – their conscience came alive – of not being able to understand that the prophets had testified of how the Lord will take away the sins of the world. The same way it is for Christians today. Many do not care to study and understand the scriptures. They are manipulated by evil-minded pastors and prophets/prophetesses. Jesus is expecting us to be filled with the

conscience of truth. To have a heart yearning to know more of the Lord. During His teaching in Matthew 16:3-4, Jesus expressed concern on our ability to understand the move of God at every point of our journey in faith when He said, “...O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign...” Is our conscience burning today that we haven't study our bibles lately? Are we happy that we are unable to understand the move of God in our time? Are we satisfied with running from prophets to prophetesses in search for answers to our problems when we could have used that precious time to study our bibles? Godly conscience should lead us to know God more. Let us serve in this calling with our conscience alive, and He is faithful to take away the cloak of shame and cloud of blindness, so that we can approach His glory and grace more easily.

**Faith confession:** Thank you dear Lord, for opening my understanding to the fact that you expect me to truly understand every word in scriptures that expresses your salvation for me.

**Let us pray:** Lord, as I continue to take this journey of self-realisation, open my understanding more to the signs of the times and reveal to me how to remain in your anointing until my dying day. Amen!

**Meditation:** Mat. 11:25-30; 1 Sam. 3:19-21



# Understanding Your Spiritual DNA

*I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. Isaiah 44:3-4*



Can we take a look at the statement in the anchor verse more deeply? There is a spiritual fact underlying what the prophet proclaimed from the Lord here. For the Lord Himself said, "I will pour my spirit..." Not another spirit, but the same spirit that lifted Jesus from the grave, made Him to have supernatural appearance before His disciples and able to lift Him to the right hand of the Father in heaven. We are connected to Jesus Christ, being united by the same spirit. He once said that anyone who would not drink His blood and eat of His flesh does not have life in him or her— John 6:53. What does this mean? What is He trying to achieve by compelling us to be in His form? In biological science, DNA represent life, and enables the human body to communicate with the blood. Thus, given us our unique identity and behaviour. The anchor verse above says that our human identity and behaviour must be altered through the receipt of the spirit of God. Spiritual oppressors have been referred to in Isaiah 44:4, as "grass" and "water courses." We can trample upon the plots of inhumanity and wickedness towards us if we have His spirit. We cannot be like Christ, acting in the capacity of His spirit without drawing near to God. This is why the Psalmist reiterated in Psalms 73:28, "But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works." Did we hear that? We live as though we are orphans without His spirit. This is why Jesus promises His disciples that he will not live them as orphans, "I will not leave you as

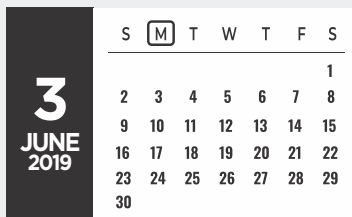
orphans; I will come to you" – John 14:18 (ESV). Comfort comes by the spirit of God. We are not supposed to experience need of any kind., as long as we are vessels ready for His need. He is able to provide all that we ask for, provided we are showcasing His glory in us through His spirit. Without the spirit of God in us, there is no way we can spring forth and live a life of supernatural blessings. His spirit attracts His angels, and His angels comes with His blessings. I will encourage us to keep drawing near to God in our outlook and behaviour, so that He can release His spirit upon us. The moment we become Christlike, our DNA replicates that of Christ, and our actions will reflect His personality and character. Then, the favour and help we desire will definitely come our way.

**Faith confession:** Lord! I live in fright every day because I lack the fullness of your spirit. I understand that I can have the same spirit that lived in you when you were here on earth if I follow to know you more.

**Let us pray:** Lord – the receipt of your spirit means the receipt of blessings. Help me to position myself to receive your spirit, so that I can achieve everlasting dominion in the midst of oppressors trying to pull me down from doing your divine will for my soul. Let my name continually find a place in your heart. Amen!

**Meditation:** 1 Corinthians 2:9-16;  
Romans 8:9-11





# The Wave of Righteousness

*O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea. Isaiah 48:18*



In our last devotional topic, we studied that with the spirit of God in us, we can receive the blessings of God, and remain faithful in His service. Today, as we meditate on the anchor verse, we also come to realise that our obedience to the commands of God will enable us to experience peace. Again, when we obey His commandments our righteousness is compared to the waves of the sea. Earlier when we read verse 1 of Isaiah 48, we saw God's anger as the people served "not in truth, nor in righteousness." Is God too rigid? Is He expecting too much from us? Is it ever possible to please Him? Jesus expressed the mind of God in John 4:23, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him." We come across a statement that tells us of how God values the manner He expects humanity to come to Him. God is searching for anyone who can serve Him wholeheartedly, not because of what they can get from Him, but for who He is. Now, let's take a look at the anchor verse again. If you have seen the waves of the sea before, you will understand what God meant by the statement that our righteousness will become as the waves of the sea. You see, waves are not hidden. Waves rise so high for all to see. This is what God expects from us. Our righteousness is very important as instruments of confession and soul winning. As instruments of confessions, Romans 10:10 says, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Can we see that? Our

salvation is hinged on our confessions, and what our heart believes is what defines the extent of our righteousness. So, when we say we are righteous in Christ, we should equally confess Christ as Lord and saviour, else His righteousness will not make a way for us. The Psalmists says in Psalms 85:10-13, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps." What does this imply? When we serve God in truth, we obtain His mercy. God expects truth to be commonplace – that is, our mouth confesses God exactly as our heart professes Him. Then, the goodness of God will pour down from heaven upon everyone whose steps please Him.

**Faith confession:** I understand that God is interested in those who follow the steps of truth and righteousness. He wants us to sincerely honour and exalt Him above all our worldly desires.

**Let us pray:** Dear Lord, I am unable to approach the mercy seat of God the father without your saving grace and mediation. Help me to overcome the weight of sin by your blood and mercy, and teach me the ways of truth and righteousness, by which my entire being is secured in your glory. Amen!

**Meditation:** Luke 6:45; Psalm 11:1-7

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## Two Kings Apart

*the king's servants came to bless our lord king David, saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne. 1 Kings 1:47*



In the above anchor verse, we see a prayer that aimed at distinguishing the achievements of both kings – father and his son. The servants had seen and witnessed David's successes, yet they wished for a much greater success during the reign of Solomon. This is what life is all about. This is why scripture says in Isaiah 64:4, "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him." You see, fighting to inherit our father's wealth is really uncalled for if we are in tune with God. It is expected that we prosper beyond the achievements of our parents. To wait on God is a demonstration of love for His works here on earth (1 Cor. 2:9). King David and his son, King Solomon, demonstrated their love for God through their acts. David gathered for the house of God and Solomon built it. Both of them set ordinances for worship in the house of God (Neh. 12:45), to the extent King David hand-made about 4000 instruments of worship (1 Chron. 23:5). David wrote Psalms for prayers, worship and praise (about 73). Solomon is remembered for three thousand proverbs and a thousand and five songs of worship (1 Kings 4:32). Have you imagined a son that will follow your footsteps and even excel more than you? Is this not the reason we pray to have children? Are you wishing to be better than your children? On the ugly side, David had taste for the wife of others? Solomon exceeded him also in this- in that women willingly came unto him to be wives and concubines. Some of his wives were given

by kings from other nations for the purpose of allegiance. Are you seeing your person in your son or daughter? Is there an attitude that affected you negatively that you now notice in your children? Solomon's disposition towards women was not a thing of joy in the end from the statement of dissatisfaction that he made – Eccl. 7:28, "...one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found." Despite his greatness, he had no satisfaction. David had said – "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace" – Psalms 37:37. Was Solomon perfect to the end? Reading through Ecclesiastes 2, we can link Solomon's failure to selfishness, while David's success to selflessness. Solomon fulfilled David's request to build the house of God, but later went ahead to earn fame for himself, neglecting the status of God, that Jesus saw his glory as lesser than that of the lilies of the valley (Mat. 6:29).

**Faith confession:** Lord, I understand that it is important to stay firm to my confessions of faith all the days of my life, and I should not forsake you to follow the hearts of men, even if they are my loved ones.

**Let us pray:** Lord – help me to follow the footstep of faith. Let me not be carried away by doctrines that will turn my heart against you. Let my soul be ravished with your thoughts daily, to guide me right. Amen!

**Meditation:** 1 Kings 11:1-13; Ecclesiastes 2



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# Humanity Versus Divinity

*And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his  
Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Galatians 4:6*



If there is any discussion that almost tore the foundation of Christianity in the early years of the movement, it was the issue centred on the divinity of Christ. Why is it important to Christians that Jesus must be the son of God? Will our faith become useless if He is less than being a son of God? You see, it is important that Jesus is equal with God, for us to attain a spiritual status of purity in our thoughts. This is why Muslims are angry with Christians, because we have a mediator of equal status with God. It is this equality we want to talk about in today's devotional. When people talk of Christianity as a way of life, they are referring to our ability to demonstrate the mindset of humanity. However, this is where many ends their quest of the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ. Yet, when we say the spirit of Christ cries in our hearts – we are saying that we have the reasoning of the Divine living in us. So that my confession shall be, “by the power of His spirit in me, I am “no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” – Gal. 4:7. Doesn't this confession points to the presence of the divine being of God in us? I encourage you to make this confession also. By this, we can attest that Christianity is divine and human. The humanity in Jesus was well preached in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, when we read of His healings by His human compassions. But, the book of John opened up with His Divinity, which is how God became the incarnate Word that formed all that we see here on earth and beyond. May I say here that many of us do not yet understand that our response to the call of

divinity is more important to our relationship with humans? His spirit must cry in your heart – ensuring the will of God is carried out. When people feel they can dress as they wish into any gathering to worship God, what they understand is the humanity in Christianity, which is the tolerance doctrine. The practice of Divinity brings us into a life of reverence; of sanctity; of consecration; and of submission. Humanity enables us to accept one another and live in peace through communal laws and practices that accepts one another (2 Cor. 13:11). Albeit, our communal life is supposed to draw us to the Divine nature (Rom 15:6). It is our understanding of Divinity that makes us to act as representatives of God on earth, who must live in holiness and righteousness, as expected of those having the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16). Jesus expressed the importance of satisfying the call of divinity and humanity in the two great laws of love - for God and our neighbours (Mark 12:30-31).

**Faith confession:** I understand that the call of service is both divine and humane. I might have satisfied the need to live compassionately among my neighbours but failed to please God and preach His gospel.

**Let us pray:** Lord, let my desire to serve you take over my life. Let my life be cast in your work. Let my outward appearance bring souls to you. Let my response to help others be guided by the need of the gospel. Amen!

**Meditation:** John 10:34-42; 2 Peter 1:2-4

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## Rich in Christ

*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. 2 Corinthians 8:9*



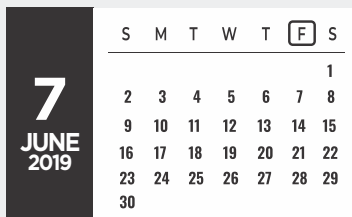
Paul referred to material riches in the anchor verse above. To confirm this, we need to take a look at how Saint Paul exhorted the churches of Macedonian for ministering to their needs., as we read from verse 1 of the eighth chapter of the second book of Corinthians. From verse 5 through 7, we come to see how these believers gave themselves wholeheartedly to serving the Lord, and also cared so much for the Saints out of the abundant blessings that the Lord blessed the members with. Here is the confirmation that we can be really be rich in Christ. The concern is how we can sustain our soul in Him. We read in our last devotional of how Solomon failed God when his later interest was how to fulfil the lust of the flesh – in women and material pleasure. If we learnt from the Macedonian churches mentioned earlier, and how they used their riches for the promotion of the work of Christ, we will begin to see how riches can help in our service of faith unto the Lord, materially and spiritually. God did not stop Job from being rich, neither was Abraham poor. If riches were evil, Joseph from Arimathea wouldn't be a disciple of Jesus, and even given the honour of laying his body to rest in a tomb that no dead had been lain before (John 19:38-42). If not for Joseph's personality, whom among the disciples would have been bold enough to meet Pilate for the body of Jesus? At this crucial point of need, when the body needed to be preserved and laid to rest, the disciples had all disappeared from public appearance. It was rather the rich (Joseph) and the highly placed in governance (Nicodemus), that took the body from the glaring sight of

passers-by and gave Him a respectful burial, albeit He was not going to lay there beyond three days. Again, someone had the donkey that Jesus rode in that triumphant entry into Jerusalem (John 12:14). Someone gave the well-furnished dining hall they used for the last supper (Luke 22:8-14). Someone equally provided the upper room where the disciples waited for the Holy Ghost. What is wrong with amassing riches is when people chase after wealth at the expense of the poor and needy, including widows. – like greedy politicians do, who come to poverty by oppressing the poor (Pro. 10:15). If you are not oppressing the needy and in competition with a widow that fears the Lord over her source of income, and you are also a believer with the mind of Christ, how does becoming rich negates your love for the Lord and His works? Since riches attracts friends, we can also preach the gospel to them (Pro. 14:20; Acts 10:44).

**Faith confession:** I am a child of God, through the abundant grace found in Christ. I am joint heirs with Christ. He laid down his riches for me, so that I can propagate His gospel with the riches he gives me.

**Let us pray:** Lord, I am willing to become rich by your grace and glory. Bless me according to the riches you have earned for yourself. Let me find favour with the rich as you also found favour with them. Amen!

**Meditation:** Ecclesiastes 10:20; 1 Samuel 2:7-8; Acts 10:1-44



# The Sin Against the Spirit

*... whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath  
never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin. Mark 3:29*



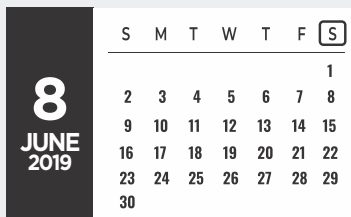
How can we overcome the sin against the Spirit of God? They accused Jesus that he was possessed by an unclean spirit, and this was how they earned eternal damnation. How many times have we overlooked and mocked the work of God in our midst? The situation is made worse by the multitudes of lying prophets that parades themselves on our streets daily, that we find it difficult to realise that God still works in our midst through Jesus Christ. Can we then be excused by this as the reason why we mocked the work of God, or rejected divine instructions from the Lord by His holy spirit? Is this not why we are instructed to be cautious in 1 John 4:1, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." The only way to test who is speaking for Christ was confession of Jesus Christ as the son of God, who lived among men in flesh and now in heaven at the right hand of God (1 John 4:2-3). But, before we can even identify such prophets, we are expected to have Christ living in us – hence, apostle John said, in 1 John 4:4, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." You can see that our confession of faith is dependent on the spirit of Christ dwelling in us (Gal. 4:6). We can take learning from the believers in Berea, recorded in Acts 17:11 who "... received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Ignorance is not an excuse. If we study the scriptures and yearn for the indwelling of His spirit, we won't fall into the sin of blasphemy by

mocking the holy ghost, when actually it is the move of God. It is more important to God now that we repent than to mock others, when we are not even sure of our own stand in the Lord. Let us therefore, receive the word of God with open heart. Let us receive His miracles with open mind also. Let us appreciate His grace in our lives with thanksgiving. Our joy should be established in our knowledge of God through Christ. Hence, scripture says in 1 Corinthians 1:31, "...He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." Meaning, we are "a nobody" without Christ. We must keep recalling to mind – how the mercies of the Lord have given us hope to live (Lam. 3:21-22). Since it is difficult for us to judge the move of God by physical observations, as "...Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14)," we are encouraged to seek God early (Isa. 26:9), so that we can understand His ways early too.

**Faith confession:** Lord – I might have been guilty of the sin of blasphemy, mocking the manifestation of your power in the miracles in the life of others because I was ignorant of your ways.

**Let us pray:** My Lord and my God, you are the God of second chance. I understand it is a grievous sin to mock the move of your spirit, but Lord let your mercy be poured out for me, because truly I might have sinned against your spirit in ignorance. Amen!

**Meditation:** 1 Corinthians 1:25-31;  
Isaiah 55:8-9



# Keeping the Lord in Remembrance

*Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. Psalms 30:4*



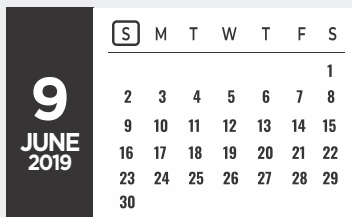
**T**he purpose of the communion as seen in the Lord's command was to keep the Lord in our memory forever (Luke 22:19). We can remember the Lord for His outstanding personality as a God who cares for His children. He is the same, yesterday and forever (Hebrews 13:8; Mal. 3:6). He is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy (Psalms 145:8). He is full of grace and truth (John 1:14). The whole earth is full of His glory (Isaiah 6:3). He is the one that fulfils promises. He empowers us to make decrees that come to pass (Lam. 3:37). His habitation is holy (Zech. 2:13). He is righteous (Psalms 11:7). He is a friend in need, who is able to lay down His life to save others (John 15:13). He has the power to confer the benefit of sonship upon those that follows and do His will (Gal. 4:7). We can go on and on. Who else will you keep in remembrance if not the Lord Jesus Christ, with all the attributes and more that He earned for His glory. Just as I am privileged to have Him as my mediator, so you are. Has He not earned salvation for us, where would we have kept our faces in the midst of all the iniquities that we committed, some of which we cannot even mention in public. But, He heard our cry for mercy and our plead of guilt, and our hidden confessions, and saved us – still allowing us to raise our heads to the admirations of others. Have you thought of what would become of your image when your sins are cast in public for the world to see? Some of us will be in police net and sent to prisons if our hidden atrocities come under the trial of the law and the full glare of

public opinion. However, God through Christ has saved us from the torture that the devil had planned for us. Therefore, we have no excuses for not following the Lord, and doing what He commanded that we do through the gospel. None of us is a saint, hence scripture says in Romans 2:1– “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.” For the sake of the name of the Lord – and not to drag His name into the mud of shame, let us repent wholeheartedly, putting on godly characters and behaviours. Let us come to Him boldly in purity and sanctity, rather than crying for forgiveness for our sins everyday – but to avoid sin and live a life that will honour His holiness and bring admiration and glory upon His name before unbelievers (Mat. 5:16).

**Faith confession:** Lord - I feel ashamed that I condemn others for the same sin that I live in daily. Today, I repent of my sins (*you can mention them*). I am willing to follow you wholeheartedly now.

**Let us pray:** Dear everlasting Lord and saviour, in you I have hope of living a life of peace. Though my heart echo my sorrows in sin, yet my heart trust in your loving kindness. Keep me safe from sin. Amen!

**Meditation:** Matthew 7:1-5; Matthew 9:13; Hebrews 2:3



## What do I Lack Yet?

*All these things have I kept from my youth up:  
what lack I yet? Matthew 19:20*



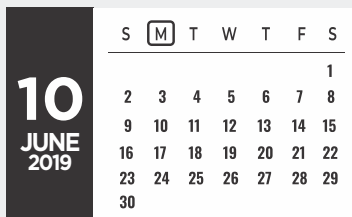
We are good at recounting what we have now and do fail to know what we lack yet. Martha had a good heart of hospitality but lacked the patience to hear the word of God (Luke 10:41-42). The young man in the anchor verse had wealth because he kept the ten commandments but lacked the faith to trust in God to provide beyond his imagination. Hence, he couldn't obey the Lord to sell all and give to the poor around Jesus that were disturbing Him for food (Matthew 19:20-22). Some young girls are beautiful, but lack good upbringing. Some young men are handsome and well built, but lack respect for their elders. Some preachers are focused on increasing church membership that they have failed to raise saints unto the Lord. Some married women are so busy on face makeups to keep their husband under their seductive power and have failed to develop themselves with the necessary knowledge to run a home (Proverbs 14:1). For these women, their marriage comes crashing when their beauty and seduction could not help the man to grow into recognition and trust (Proverbs 12:4; Proverbs 31:11). Some parents are so good at quarrelling with their children that they forget to sit them down and teach them the wisdom and fear of God. Those in government are so carried away maintaining fame that they forget to keep the promises they made to the poor they deceived during their campaigns. Some students are so intelligent, having A's in all their exams, but have failed to think beyond the books they have studied – not knowing that

their studies are supposed to help them build the desolate places. Some are so arrogant over the pride of intelligence that they can even abuse their lecturers. Some are so rich that they lack humility. What we lack can make us to suffer. What we lack is the needful thing that we ought to go after. Mary was rich, as she could afford an alabaster bottle of oil – a one-year-salary perfumed oil, but she lacked the knowledge of God, hence she was caught in the very act of prostitution. To remedy her weakness, as contained in Luke 10:42, we read earlier, she sat at Jesus' feet to hear the word and be filled with the knowledge of God. There is something you lack, it might be respect, humility, loyalty to the fingers that feeds you, respect to your spouse, discipline, prudence, name it! If you do not address that disadvantage now, it will undress you in no distant time.

**Faith confession:** Lord – I am aware I lack (*name what you lack*). This lack has affected me (*say how it affected you*). This devotional topic has opened my understanding why I should address this lack.

**Let us pray:** Lord, I pray that you take pride away from me, so that I can sit down to think about all that I lack, that has eaten up my joy and making it difficult for me to bear fruits in your vineyard. Amen!

**Meditation:** Proverbs 30:7-14;  
Proverbs 6:16-19



# When Grace is Debated – Nothing Else Matters

*O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me. Micah 6:3*



The first time I came across the above scripture verse was sometime in 2008. I had prayed that early morning and feeling that I was lagging behind my colleagues in the physical successes that I see. Then, as if in a trance, I saw this verse of the Bible – Micah 6:3, flashed like lightening before my eyes. I quickly opened it – because so I have grown to know that God speaks to me through scripture portions. On reading this verse, I started feeling very guilty of not recognising how far God had been there for me. I remembered where He picked me up from, and where I was on that fateful day. You see, severally we keep expecting God to do more for us without appreciating what He had done for us. A brother recalled a voice he heard some time ago also. He had helped a lady knocked down in an accident by a hit-and-run taxi to a hospital and equally paid her hospital bills. Once the lady was well, she begged for the man to assist her with money to take a taxi to her destination. The brother gave her some money, expecting a thank you. The lady did not say a word, she boarded a taxi and left. While this brother was wondering what was wrong with the lady, he heard a voice of rebuke – “Is this not how you have treated me? Have I not blessed you enough? How many times have you return to thank me? Why are you expecting her to thank you for this little help you did to Her? Haven’t I saved you from situations worse than this before?” On hearing these words, he recalled how he ran to the house of God to pray for forgiveness and met the pastor that he was going to offer testimony

and thanksgiving to God before the congregation. The prophet Micah wrote in Micah 6:2, “...for the Lord hath a controversy with his people...” This is a terrible prophecy. The reason is what the prophet captured in the anchor verse. The children of Israel were ungrateful – as many of us are doing today. For this, the prophet spoke further, “The Lord’s voice crieth unto the city...” (Micah 6:9). Is this not wickedness against the Lord? Why should I live a life that will make the voice of the Lord to cry through the city? The earlier mankind realises the evil of rejecting God and the repercussion of toying with His grace, the better for us. We should not take His grace for granted, as though it is freedom to live in sin. In the midst of lack, and hunger around the world, I keep asking myself if the punishment pronounced in Micah 6:15, “...Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap...” is being enforced by heaven.

**Faith confession:** I refuse to be caged by sin. I renounce every bond I have with the evil one. I submit myself under the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ. I submit myself under the mercy of God in Christ.

**Let us pray:** Lord! Help me to remain fateful unto your grace. Let your abundant grace lead me on the path that you have destined for me. Let me abide under your canopy of mercy always. Amen!

**Meditation:** Romans 6:1-2; Luke 17:12-19

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# Let Your Lamp Burn Continually

*...there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. Rev. 4:5*



The use of lamp as a figurative representation of the spirit of God above, is common in scripture. The understanding of keeping our spiritual lamp burning can be seen in Revelations 2:5, when the Lord said – "...I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." Jesus also said in Matthew 5:14, that believers are the light of the world. He went further to say that He has positioned us on a lampstand to give light to the world, because no man lights up a lamp and hide it behind an obstruction. By this, we understand that the Lord wants to use each and every one of us, who have yielded to His bidding as a lamp. Such that, if you are a lamp and I am a lamp, and we all gather as lamps of God in Christ, then we have formed the kingdom of light. It equally means that if any of us backslide and stop producing light, darkness will invade from that end. Darkness brings about the manifestation of evil. Hence, the more we have believers who are not willing to manifest the glory of God, the more the children of God will keep experiencing the attack of the devil. Jesus is the light of the world and anyone who follows the Lord will never walk in darkness (John 8:12). We are His lights when we live by the gospel of our Lord, which is now the light of the world after He ascended to heaven (2 Cor. 4:4). This equally means that since we are His lights, our lives have also become His gospel as examples for unbelievers. So, if we fail to manifest His glory in all that we do, we have equally become agents of darkness whom the devil will use to

destroy the gospel of Christ. For us to become the lamp of God, the Lord must become our light (Psa. 36:9) and Christ must dwell in us so that our hearts will become illuminated to give outward lights – in character and outlook. Still, the Lord only make the righteous and upright in heart to manifest His light and joy (Psa. 97:11). There is something the Lord does, He rewards your righteous service before Him by converting His reward upon your life into a burning light that announces you (Psa. 37:6). If we continue to burn the light of righteousness, of truth, of love, of unity of faith, of obedience to His commands, and of sanctity unto consecration, then are we His lights upon the face of earth, and no force of darkness can overcome us (Mat.4:16). Fear is a projection of darkness. Keep the gospel life and burning in your heart, and you are 100% secured in His glory.

**Faith confession:** Lord! I understand the reason why you used light to explain the position believers occupy here on earth, as the ones carrying the presence of God all over the world through the confession of the gospel with their mouth.

**Let us pray:** Dear Lord! I pray that you continually light up my path with your spirit and order my footstep to follow your anointing. Distinguish me with your arm of victory over darkness. Amen!

**Meditation:** Matthew 4:16;  
Matthew 5:16; John 1:1-5



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## Living for Posterity

*That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and  
that which is wanting cannot be numbered. Ecclesiastes 1:15*



From the anchor verse above, the preacher clearly demonstrated the limitations of human wisdom. We reject things that we no longer found useful. But, it is not so with God. He is capable of making crooked paths straight (Isaiah 42:16) and giving mankind a second chance to change (1 Cor. 1:28). If we have the mindset of God, we can turn a new leaf and join Him in saving the world from collapse. This is because, except God intervenes, it is difficult for mankind to make right all the wrongs we have caused – from environmental pollution to war, for instance. You are in a position of authority to cause a change yet limited by time. The anchor verse above shows that things can definitely go wrong – love, friendship, marriages, etc., can turn sour. Today will come to an end, and tomorrow will also end. What have you thought for tomorrow. In Eccl. 1:12, Solomon said, “I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem.” Solomon ruled with great wisdom from God, but a time came he referred to himself in the past, “was king.” Hence, he always concluded that all the fame he laboured to get and the wealth he gathered were all vanities. Come to think of it, is there anything on earth that lasts forever? But we can live a life of remembrance – of how we served the Lord, of how we demonstrated love to our neighbours, of how we turned our society into a better and habitable environment, etc. We must live with the mindset of leaving a legacy of righteous living behind when our day of calling unto upper glory is dawn. Scripture says in Ecclesiastes 7:4, “The heart of the wise is in the house of

mourning...,” meaning, that the wise considers the day he will depart this world, and such thoughts enable him to choose the kind of life he will live on earth wisely. Hence, he will not give in to a deceitful life of self-praise (Luke 12:15). He is careful not to offend God, knowing that upon death, he is going to face God and account for the life he lived. We can live for posterity if we attend to our needs and wants with caution, knowing that all material possessions will definitely end up as vanities. Most importantly, we should not wait until our relationship with others go sour before we try to make amends. Also, we can stop the divisions going on among Christians by focusing on the gospel of Christ. We can really do a lot to make things right. If you were to close your eyes today, what will you want to be remembered for?

**Faith confession:** Through today's devotional, I understand that nothing lasts forever, and that I should make use of the time the Lord has given to me upon the face of earth, to live in peace and harmony among others. Through me, the Lord wants to make a change that will positively affect others.

**Let us pray:** Dear Lord! I am your ambassador here on earth. Empower me to become the change the world is looking for. Let my days be spent pointing others to the path of truth. Amen!

**Meditation:** John 9:4; Jeremiah 22:13; Psalms 112:1-10

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## Breaking the Yoke of Perpetual Bondage

*...it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion,  
that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck. Genesis 27:40*



As seen from the verse above, there is always a time for breakthrough. With the right determination, and supported by the will of God, we will be out of bondage in no time. With God, our breakthrough can happen behind the scene – as long as we are in a Father and child relationship with God. Hence, Scripture says in Romans 5:8, “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Who will pay the penalty of conviction for someone who is yet to realise he or she is doomed for destruction, if not God himself. The same way it is today, that as we continue to grow in our relationship with Him, we are relieved of our bondages. In the fruitful vine devotional of 23 January 2019, I explained how Jesus became the vail separating the world from the throne of heaven, after the physical vail in the temple tore into two (Matt. 27:51). Today, we shall understand how understanding Jesus as the vail can enable us to become free from every bondage. Now, the perpetual presence of the cloud is seen when Moses went into the cloud to discuss with God, in Exodus 24:15-18. We have heard flights cancelled because of weather, as the sky becomes cloudy. How many of us do recognise that this same cloudy situation was revered by the Israelites? In Numbers 9:19, scripture says – “And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord and journeyed not.” Did we read that? Why am I so bothered about understanding that there is a solution to our problems behind our physical sufferings? You see, being conscious of the presence of help that you can approach is

enough to take away whatsoever bondage you are experiencing. This is why the Bible says without Faith, no one can please God (Hebrews 11:6). What is Faith? Simply put, faith is that solution you are always conscious of. If you study the Bible with the mindset that God will meet you in His word - this is Faith. If you believe that taking prescribed drugs can heal your illness – that also is faith. But, in this devotional we will separate the Faith (with a big letter F) from faith (small letter f). We will do this to explain what faith in God and Faith as God mean. Proverbs 30:5 says – “Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.” Here, we refer to the small letter faith as trust in God. The word of God is faith, which purifies our heart (Acts 15:9) when we follow the words spoken by the Lord (John 6:63). The “faith,” received by the word that quickens our spirit (acquiring faith) makes us to approach God continually until He lives in us (manifesting Faith).

**Faith confession:** Lord! I understand that yokes are broken when I exercise divine dominion as Isaac explained to Esau in the anchor verse above. And, this is possible when God become my Faith.

**Let us pray:** Oh God! Help me to retain your wisdom and knowledge in me, to the extent that my confession will represent your will. Empower me to patiently study your word continually. Amen!

**Meditation:** Matthew 11:28-30; Romans 8:15; Exodus 15:2

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# His Excellent Lovingkindness

*How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. Psalms 36:7*

I was with a brother who felt God was wicked to him. He recounted how he had suffered through his 38 years on earth, despite being a faithful believer. Also, a sister told me there was no need serving God and waiting for His direction in life. She supported her claim with stories of how her friend who dated and had pre-marital intimacy is in marriage enjoying, while she was yet to marry. A young student argued that if he had bribed lecturers he would have made good grades in school. He gave examples of those who left with good results because they bribed their way through school. In each of these encounters, I had pointed them to Psalms 36:7, the anchor verse above. You see, people might seem to have it all now through paths that don't glorify God. However, if you go closer to them you will see that they even hiss more than you do, because in some cases, those choices they made outside the will and ordinances of God always give them bitterness through life. God can not lie! This is the point I want to make here. If someone had extra-marital intimacy and got her husband, does that make the act of fornication a representation of the holiness of God? If someone lobbied to get a contract without prior-qualification, has that made the act of bribery an act of righteousness before God? I don't look at the present moment, for I have seen many who rushed through life, finally getting hurt in the end. The Israelites complained also that it was no gain serving and waiting on God, in Malachi 3:14, "Ye have said, 'it is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance...'" They even wanted their own king like other nations (1 Sam. 8:6-7). And, we see that this attitude

made them to reject Jesus Christ also. I was with a brother some time ago, and he introduced me before his wife as a Pastor. The wife turned and looked at me with disdain. I looked at her and prayed for her soul. Her beauty makeup and outlook definitely will not allow her to humble herself in the sight of anyone who represents the gospel of truth. You cannot hate God because His word negates your material and selfish drive for fame. We trust God, because we are very sure He won't go back on His words. When He forgives, we are sure we are forgiven. When He blesses, we know our pains have ended. When He heals – it is established forever. This is how we know that His loving kindness is far beyond what man can give. I have looked back at days and times when many were heroes of beauty, wealth and of fame. Today, they experience bitterness all over as they consistently reject the excellent lovingkindness of God. Caution is the right word – for, it is the end that justifies the means (Psa. 37:37).

**Faith confession:** I am willing to follow the path that the Lord has destined for me. I understand that those who achieve success in life early without obedience to God, might still live their end in bitterness.

**Let us pray:** Lord! I know it can be difficult to wait on you. I pray, help me to endure till you answer me. Teach me humility and prudence, and how I can live in righteousness as I wait on you. Amen!

**Meditation:** Jeremiah 29:11; Psalms 37:7-40

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## Why the Struggle to Survive?

*Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength.... Isa. 17:10*



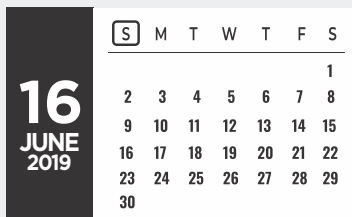
We struggle when we do not have the right keys to open the doors of success. We read in scripture of how a bunch of keys was handed over to Peter, and that would make him to fulfil his destiny. Before Jesus gave him the keys to success, he was confirmed as one who can hear from the father through Peter's sincere quest for superior information beyond the mundane (Matt. 16:17). This equally places some special care of duty before Peter. First, it is important that Peter open the doors only with the keys that the Lord gave to him, else the gate of hell will not give way. Second, Peter must equally know the key that opens which door. This require diligence and observation. Third, Peter must also understand that he cannot open the door that the Lord has shut (Rev. 3:7-8). A look around will show how humanity have lived in want and penury. So much struggle, with little to write home about. I was about to pray with someone to be delivered from need and want some time ago when I heard, "tell him to repent." Yet, this was someone I expected to make heaven at the moment of death. Honestly, this was when I understand Revelation 3:7, "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." Hence, except God be willing (Luke 22:42), the doors of breakthrough and deliverance can remain perpetually shut. And, honestly, I am certain that the first thing we are supposed to do as Christians is to please God and obtain His willingness in any matter that affects our lives. This shows that, when we are struggling to

live, despite all the tongues we can speak – we should approach God in humility and repentance. He is faithful to forgive and bless according to the measure of faith in us. Recently, I have heard people pray as if they are commanding God against His divine will. I have equally heard many saying they can challenge God with strong reasons. Well, if there is a strong reason to question the decision of God concerning any issue in your life, why not go ahead. However, I will want us to take learning from King David, in 1 Chronicles 29:14, "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee." Is it the tithes, offerings and seed sacrifices that will move Him to turn the other way when we are wanting? I do not feel so.

**Faith confession:** Lord! No man can manipulate your judgement with sacrifices. You work with those who harken unto you and have respect unto your person. Such a one you will always bless.

**Let us pray:** Help me, Dear Lord! Teach me how to apply caution in whatsoever I do. Help me to overcome the laxity to search through your word daily, and the patience to hear from heaven. Strengthen me with the same spirit that was upon Peter to become worthy to handle the keys of divine destiny. Amen!

**Meditation:** Isaiah 17:10-11; 2 Samuel 24:24; Psalms 51:6; Matthew 7:14; Psalms 15



## Satisfied with His Fatness and Goodness

*... I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord. Jeremiah 31:14*



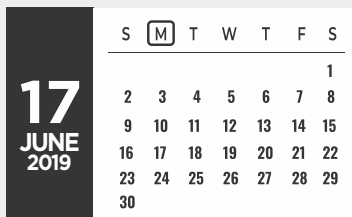
The priest is rewarded with plenty to eat because the people are now satisfied with goodness. It means that those officiating at the altar of the Lord will be hungry and live in want if the people are not satisfied with the goodness of the Lord. Our quest now is how to attract this goodness of the Lord upon the people – upon the congregants in the service of the Lord, so that everyone will experience the goodness of God. The Lord is really happy when we have more than enough to eat. He is not expecting us to serve in His vineyard in hunger. With the expectation of heaven that the gospel be preached through every nook and cranny, it is equally important that those who bear the gospel on their lips and those they preach to, who have yielded to the bidding of the Lord should not lack anything. Now, let's take a look at the precursor to the anchor verse quoted above. In verse 11, of Jeremiah chapter thirty-one, God said His people were already redeemed and that He delivered them from the hand of one that was stronger than them. If the above statement is brought forward to the New Testament era, it would mean that we have been redeemed from the hand of the prince of this world – the devil himself, through the blood of Jesus. In verse 12, scripture reveals the expectation of God now that He has redeemed us – “Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all.” We are expected to rejoice and sing unto Him. Then

His goodness and overflow of abundant blessings will make us not to experience sorrow any more. So, it is not about meeting God to bless us first. We must be thankful for the price of redemption He paid in Christ for our heinous abominations against His name. What I have seen, is how people keep taxing God in their prayers and demanding for material blessings. Our discussion so far says that our deliverance will become permanent, accompanied with the flow of blessings, if we first appreciate His redemption and singing unto Him. Let us go back to the anchor verse. Why will God want to reward the priest, a pastor who intercedes and lead souls to God through Christ, with plenty? It is because the priest is teaching and achieving the desire of God, in Habakkuk 2:14, “...the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” And, the people are willing to exercise the knowledge of God, hence God is allowing them to taste of His goodness.

**Faith confession:** Lord – I am certain that I can have enough to satisfy my soul if I appreciate your redemption in my life – giving you thanks and praise for my deliverance and serving you wholeheartedly.

**Let us pray:** Dear Lord, I pray thee – help me to overcome the anxiety to satisfy my needs and wants, so that I can focus my attention on pleasing you and supporting your cause for humanity first. Amen!

**Meditation:** 2 Chronicles 7:1-22



## The Joy of a Soul Winner

*But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.  
2 Corinthians 10:17*



**B**efore we became born again, we were sinners, and now that we have Christ in our lives, if we truly love sinners the way Christ did, we would become effective soul winners within our neighbourhood. If out of the eater came something to eat (Judges 14:14), we that are the proponents of salvation should do more than give something for others to eat, providing more than just food. The Bible says that the poor had the gospel preached to them (Matthew 11:5). We can't deny them the gospel of Christ. Being a soul winner is one of the New Testament articles of Altar sacrifices. It is an act which smells sweet savour unto God, because heaven rejoices anytime a soul is won to God as espoused in Luke 15:7, "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." Dress in neat good-looking clothes to church. It will bring attention to you and your message. If we smell with disheartening odour, people will avoid us, and we cannot be good soul winners. When you call upon the blood of Jesus during prayers, what you are doing is pleading the blood to speak better things concerning you, and this only works when you have done better things for the cause of the kingdom of God. It is 50:50, no cheating. Those who found favour with God did extra-ordinary exploits for God. Though, God can have compassion on you when you are ignorant of the truth, but the moment you know the truth, that is, having knowledge of Christ, then, you must join the bandwagon of soul winners, and beat your own drum of salvation unto the hearing of unbelievers and every idolatrous nation. In the news recently, in Benin-City of Nigeria, was how

idols were openly venerated and worshiped and called on fight the evil in the land. I have wondered why the U-turn, when we were thinking the gospel of Christ was taking over the hearts of men. Can we not see the hand of the devil in destroying the work of Christ? With all the works of faith that late Archbishop Benson Idahosa did for Christ in Benin-City, who would have believed that idolatry will still rear its ugly head. Is it not because the church has refused to address the issue of evil in society, as our gospel now centres on wealth making? This is not only limited to open worship and petitioning of idols for assistance. All over the world, we have seen attacks on churches and congregants. Was it always this way? To be candid, the church had her opportunity to win souls to Christ, but many preachers decided to follow the message of the devil – the same message he preached to Jesus in that temptation account recorded in Matthew 4:1-11; the message of food, of signs and wonders and of fame and riches. You can start the change.

**Faith confession:** Lord! I understand that if I have all the wealth in this world and have not demonstrated that I propagated your gospel with my voice and my finances, then I have gained nothing.

**Let us pray:** Lord-I pray that you fill me with the spirit of soul winning. Let my physical appearance and behaviour lead souls to you. Let me shine forth as your voice to the world now. Amen!

**Meditation:** Romans 6:6-15; Colossians 2:20

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# The Inestimable Glory of God

*Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;  
and his greatness is unsearchable. Psalms 145:3*



I am so confident of His authority over the universe, that I prefer to serve Him than waste my time praising vanities. The Psalmist says in our anchor scripture above – “great is the Lord.” Therefore, we must praise Him greatly, above every of our worries – because it is fruitless trying to estimate His worth. David rejoiced the moment the Lord opened His eyes to behold His glory. The account of that encounter is reported in Psalms 24:8-10. “Who is this King of Glory?” David asked and screamed in ecstasy as he saw the entourage of the Lord approaching from heaven. As a King, he has seen how kings were dressed and arrayed in golds, diamonds, and other ornaments of beauty. But, the sight of the Lord was something beyond human contemplation. He looked again into the sky – in his deep night visions to have a vivid gaze. Then, he saw that beyond the scenery of glory of His throne, He was equally surrounded by battalions of heavenly hosts with military arsenals in units of garrisons that could not be compared with any warfare artillery he had seen or heard of till now. He assured himself that the one with this splendour of glory was no other but, “The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.” As the procession arrived at the gate of Jerusalem, and it seemed as though those manning the gates were not prepared to welcome the Lord, David screamed at the gate keepers – “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.” The gate keepers looked at king

David, as they opened their mouth wide in astonishment, seeing no one clothed in honour and majesty, and clouded in glory approaching the gate in Jerusalem, leading to mount Zion. They gazed at king David and with one voice, the gate keepers asked – “Who is this King of glory?” On hearing their question. David could not hide his joy as the procession of the Lord came closer and closer. There and then, he exclaimed in excitement – “The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.” Halleluyah! In Revelations 4:11, scripture says – “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” Now, as joint heirs (Romans 8:17) and His branches (John 15:5) we have equally received the glory and honour that is bestowed on Christ above, been fed from the same root and stem.

**Faith confession:** Lord, I understand by today's devotional that I live by your wisdom and power. And, that the same authority you have over the kingdom of darkness, is equally available for me as long as I do your bidding.

**Let us pray:** Dear Lord! by your glory have I received grace and glory, and in your riches am I equally rich. I therefore pray O Lord, that in the manifold of your grace, let my life receive your light always. Amen!

**Meditation:** Psalms 23:1-6; Romans 2:7-10



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# The Outward Flow of Mercy

*...But there is forgiveness with thee,  
that thou mayest be feared. Psalms 130:4*



I was sharing the gospel with a young man recently. I had sat by him at lunch. Both of us ate our food in silence for a while, then I broke off the string of silence. I started with the political rancour in Rivers State of Nigeria – about the animosity among the political friends and lords who currently define the pace of events in governance. He looked at me and continued with his food. Afterwards, he demanded for water because he was getting choked. He drank his water and spoke with a grin through one side of his mouth, “I think there is need for peace. They should come together and settle their differences for the common good of everyone.” Then, I said - “you know the best way to receive respect from others?” He looked at me and motioned with his head in dissent. I then referred him to Psalms 130:4 – the anchor verse above, and I said, “we fear God because He is the only one capable of forgiving mankind of all the atrocities we commit against Him.” He asked, “will I ever forgive?” Thereafter, he recounted how he was hurt emotionally by someone he trusted so much, and the suffering he had undergone since then. I prayed with him after letting him know that we forgive not because of those who offend us, rather because of ourselves – so that we can keep our relationship with God (Matthew 6:14). You see, the politicians quarrelling now cannot forgive one another, except God dwells in their heart. We do not learn how to forgive, but we are moved beyond emotions to forgive. This is why Jesus tied our act of forgiveness to a reward of mercy from God, in Matthew 5:7, “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.” Meaning, if we

choose not to forgive others, then we are destroying the flow of mercy from God unto our soul. In Psalms 86:13, king David acknowledged the fact that by the mercy of God, was he delivered from the destruction targeted at his soul – “For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell. “So, like I said earlier – we do not forgive because we are trying to let people know we are good but because we have no choice – after all, not even the holiest man is good except God (Luke 18:19). It is either we forgive and be free from satanic oppression, or dwell in the well of unforgiveness and experience the heat of suffering from hell. We are not expected to hoard the mercy we receive from God. As we receive – so we must give. We are likened to conduits through whom the goodness and mercy of the Lord must flow to others. The same with everything about God – freely we receive, freely we must give (Mat. 10:8). So, open up and let mercy flow from God through you to others.

**Faith confession:** God, from today onwards, I open up my heart for your mercy to flow through me to your creation. I never knew I was obstructing the flow of your mercy to others until now.

**Let us pray:** Dear Lord– I pray that you lead me through the path that will enable me to learn how to continually forgive. Let my heart rejoice in your mercy and let my soul receive your mercy. Amen!

**Meditation:** Rom. 8:32; Romans 9:15; Revelations 21:6

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# When Celebration Becomes Idolatry

*The joy of our heart is ceased; our dance is turned into mourning. The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us, that we have sinned! Lamentation 5:15-16*



We must have read of several celebrations in the Bible used to mark holy feasts. When I heard this topic in my heart – that celebrations can become a source of idolatry, I thought deeply what could be responsible. Jesus replayed the prophecy of Isaiah in Isaiah 29:13, when he said - "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Mark 7:6). They did worship and praise God, as they celebrated as children of God, remembering how they were delivered from Egypt, yet the Lord says their hearts were far from Him. Moses also cautioned in Deuteronomy 8:11-14, that they should not forget God when they become blessed with plenty. You see, while it is good to celebrate and invite guests to the table to eat with you as a mark of the Lord's abundant blessings in your life, there is need to apply caution so that we do not get carried away and begin to sin against God. I have seen where birthday parties organised by Christians were used as avenues to play songs that glorifies the devil, as all manner of seductive dance steps finds their way into the dance stage. In some instances, people are served wine containing alcohol, that get many drunk. There was a time when the children of Israel celebrated the new moon, and with time God through Jeremiah warned that he was not interested in their celebrations (Jer. 7:18). A thanksgiving celebration gives honour to God and can become avenue for soul winning. But, when a celebration is done without God in the picture, just to host friends and well-wishers

for self-praise, and to relegate Christian brothers and sisters to the ground because they are not as wealthy as our business associates, then that celebration is clouded in mammon worship. If your celebration must attract the approval of God, Jesus says in Luke 14:13-14, "But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." If these sets of people are not in your celebration, then God is not interested. Your cocktail and friend's get-together parties can become a dinner for self-praise and worship of money and fame. To be on the safe side, I will advise that you only do thanksgiving celebration in your church gathering, to avoid God seeing you as one who have respect for persons.

**Faith confession:** From this day, I will endeavour to guide my celebrations, and always remember the poor when I make a feast. I will not make a feast for self-praise, but to bring glory to God.

**Let us pray:** Dear Lord, instruct me when I am about to sin against you. Let me not make a feast that will disregard your person and authority over me. Let my celebrations not be an avenue for self-praise and the worship of mammon. Remind me to remember the poor whenever I make a feast. Amen!

**Meditation:** Job 29:1-25; Luke 14:12-14

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# Receiving the Kingdom of God

*Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. Mark 10:15*



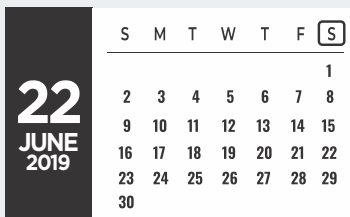
We receive the kingdom through the knowledge of God. Whenever there is a descent of the knowledge of God through Christ by His Holy Spirit, it is only for the houses of those who are worthy, and the vessels that are made ready to be filled. This is the more reason we encourage men to desire to be saved, and to wish for the rewards that comes with being saved. The drive to live a life of affluence is affecting our growth in the knowledge of God. Belonging to the Kingdom of God starts by receiving the word of the Kingdom. The word comes with peace. The kingdom has been instituted here on earth as espoused in Matthew 16:28: "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." The disciples did experience the beauty of His kingdom, and we are now living in His kingdom, with miracles, signs and wonders as some of the evidences of His presence. The revelation of spiritual secrets has never been as rampant as it is today, yet how many believers receive it? Of a truth, the Kingdom of God is alive with us. You cannot enter into the Kingdom of God until you receive it with your heart. Meaning, you must believe everything God says as true. We do not debate what He says, neither do we suggest how the Lord should order His will. This is why one cannot grow and increase in life until we receive Jesus and whoever preaches and teaches the word of God with the mind of Christ, to lead us to Him. In effect, we must have received the bearer of the gospel before

we can receive Jesus. Hear Jesus speak in Matthew 10:40 – "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." This is so as long as the teacher or preacher bears the gospel in his lips. This Kingdom of God is only within us when we can have access to the word of God. Jesus says in Luke 17:21: "...The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you." Those who have received the word and believed it with their heart to observe every instruction it contains, are those who have received the kingdom as a child. Children are curious to learn. They are humble and willing. This is what the Lord expects from us all. The Pharisees and Sadducees missed it when they became blinded by their own human interpretations in their execution of the laws of God.

**Faith confession:** Lord – I understand now that every time I come across your word, is an opportunity to receive your kingdom. This means that the kingdom is within me always.

**Let us pray:** Lord! help me to set my heart and mind towards your kingdom. Let your kingdom descend for me to enter. Open my inner-man's eyes to see the beauty of your kingdom so that I can preach it with understanding. Amen!

**Meditation:** Romans 10:14-15; Luke 4:43; Luke 9:2, 60



## Deprivation Shrouded in Tradition

*From the sole of the foot even unto the  
head there is no soundness in it. . . Isaiah 1:6*



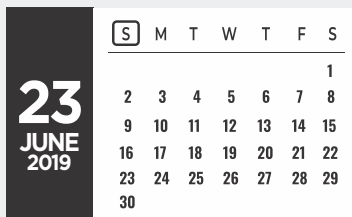
What led to this heinous deprivation in the land of Israel as captured in the anchor verse? If we read further to verse 7 and 8, of the same Isaiah chapter 1, we will see the extent of suffering in the land. Why? The children of Israel followed the traditions of men. They wanted to be like every other nation. God wanted them not to have anything to do with their evil neighbours. Their Hebrew language was already being corrupted, and they were unable to call upon the name of the Lord. Hence in Zephaniah 3:9, scripture says of how God wanted to restore His relationship with them – “For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.” God was angry with their inability to speak their pure Hebrew language, because it was breeding division among them. It was corrupting the manner of worship as their idolatry pattern of dance steps and worship ordinances were being manifested when they came to the temple of God. They had corrupted their ways with that of the heathen nations. The Lord had warned – “Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid” – Isaiah 8:12. No confederacy with the ideas shrouded in sin. No acceptance of the doctrine of wickedness. Gradually, they were losing their unique priesthood values. They were losing their identity as children of God. The same can be said today, as Christians dance all manner of dance steps that glorifies the devil like makossa, azonto, shoki, etc., and use carnal slangs in the church. Hear God speak through

the prophet - in Isaiah 18:13, “Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear and let him be your dread.” Yet the people never bothered to accept the ruling of God in their midst. To this, the prophet Isaiah cried – “Who hath believed our report?” - Isaiah 53:1. Today, we see the glory of God reduced before the congregation as pastors see themselves as the conclusion of the matter, and beyond them there is no God. We have a duty, to point this generation and beyond to God, and not to our secular world. I heard a man say callously some time ago – “how can a woman I bought with my money insult me?” I was wondering what he meant by that statement – then, he pointed out that he paid her bride price and that was equal to buying. Yet, he claims to be a deacon in a church! When are we going to do away with traditions that reduce the image of God in our lives? It is time to think! God is willing to bless those who remain pure to His call (Dan. 7:27-28).

**Faith confession:** Lord – I understand that your favour is reserved here on earth and in the heavenly places for those who remain faithful to your bidding. You want us to sanctify you in all that we do.

**Let us pray:** My Lord and God, Thank you for this devotional topic. Help me to stay faithful to you and not to be carried away by secular ways of life. Let me continually sanctify you in all that I do. Amen!

**Meditation:** Ezekiel 36:23-32



# Overcoming the Yoke of Denial

*Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. Matthew 25:28*



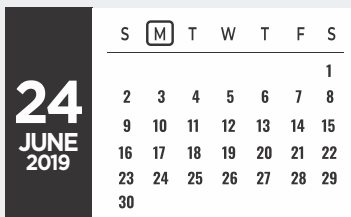
I want us to revisit the anchor verse in day 13, "...it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck" Gen. 27:40. Jacob was blessed, Esau was denied. His breakthrough will have to come from hard work, and with time will break through the dark cloud of suffering into a life of glory. It will only take some time. This was Isaac's wish for his dear first son; his first fruit. Have you considered that your blessings might have been taken by another? It is possible with special permission from God. (Matt. 25:28-30). This is one reason we must labour to be on the approval list of God. I do not think that we were born to suffer. I only feel that along the line, we had offended God, and our glory had been turned into shame (Habakkuk 2:16). Paul recalled in Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." We were born to experience the glory of God, but during our upbringing, our glory must have been lost to the traditions of men, which negated the purpose of God in our lives. This is also the problem we experience in the church when the number increases without adequate pastoring that glorifies God. In Hosea 4:7, the Lord raised a concern – "As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore, will I change their glory into shame." It is hard to see a multitude that will all be willing to seek the knowledge of God. While it is good to attract the crowd, we should equally be aware that sin spreads fast in the gathering of a multitude, as a result, believers with good manners are being spoiled and destroyed. That even, there is every tendency the pastor will start to contemplate the dictates of His

righteous calling. God calls people to uphold righteousness. Even, if we were the worst sinners, once God calls, He expects us to uphold righteousness. This is why scripture says in Isaiah 42:6, "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness..." So, if the church is experiencing denials today, we must know that our relationship with God is that of holding fast unto righteousness. We should affirm if the wealth coming to the church are God-given through genuine sources. Else, how can we explain a church swimming in wealth when the members lack the word of God. We should be careful of how the devil deceives us. The Holy Ghost is given to those who are ready and are exercising the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Wealth is granted for those who spend it for the sake of the gospel. Gifted and divine children, like Joseph, Daniel, Jeremiah, John the Baptist etc., are given to parents who serve God faithfully.

**Faith confession:** I understand that if I want to overcome denials, then I must serve God in righteousness.

**Let us pray:** Dear Lord, from the beginning of this month, I have consistently seen that God value righteousness, and that He expects every believer to serve Him in righteousness. Therefore, I am praying that your righteousness should invade my heart henceforth. Help me to achieve this. Amen!

**Meditation:** Jeremiah 4:1-2; Deuteronomy 24:8-15; Psalms 24:1-6



## Tradition Shrouded in Wickedness

*The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. Ezekiel 22:29*



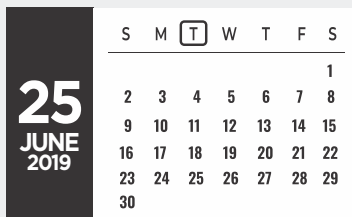
God want us to learn to do well (Isaiah 1:17). How do we learn to do well? I want to use this opportunity to talk about how many have achieved fame in the world, and then become so proud that they want to kick others under their seats in their show of arrogance and pride. They have earned names that tend to show they are now above God. The few who need a morsel of bread are now being used by them to perpetrate evil in society. The poor and needy is ready to do anything to put food on their table. These sets of people sit in high places of government to make laws that make the common man to remain under their bondage, so that the poor will have no choice but to keep coming to them for food and shelter, and they will keep using the poor to their gain. In these, they have carved a tradition of the rich is mighty for themselves. They owe the poor who worked for them for months, while they travel around the world for vain pleasures, working with the same evil spirit upon those who sold and bought slaves in the past. When they come into the church, they also want to be recognised and given special seats and becomes the object of worship on their visiting day. The pastor eulogizes them and pride himself as one moving with the tides and waves in society. And, by so doing pastors have helped to increase the spate of wickedness in society. Is this not recorded in scripture, when the Bible says in Psalm 12:8, "The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted." When evil men are praised and begged to support church building projects and social outreaches of the church, are we not eulogizing the devil, and giving him a seat in the midst of the

congregation? And, when we allow evil men to come over to the pulpit to speak to the souls God has brought to Himself, have we not installed the devil as king over the souls of the children of God? Chanting tributes to the wicked is now the tradition and norm in church and society. How did we get here? But, there is hope for the poor, if they will follow their God and stop being used as instruments of deceits by these shylock-minded moguls. God is not keeping quiet. Psalms 12:5 says, "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him." Everyone who raises his or her shoulder up after stealing from the public will not continue to smile for too long. Both them, and their cohorts will be brought to shame. By the power of God, the injustice in the land will be taken away, and the glory of the Lord will become available for His children.

**Faith confession:** Lord – from today, I refrain from allowing myself to be manipulated by evil minded people. I am ready to hold fast to that which is pure and will glorify your name, even when I am in need.

**Let us pray:** Oh Lord! save me from the tradition of men that is shrouded in wickedness. May I not praise and exalt wickedness by singing praises of those who steal from the public to enrich themselves. Amen!

**Meditation:** Philippians 4:8; Matthew 23:26-28; Psalms 36:1-4; Proverbs 28:9-10



# Doing Away with Uncertain Riches

*... be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches,  
but in the living God, ... 1Timothy 6:17*



What can possibly be responsible for people raising up their shoulders if not that they have acquired wealth irresponsibly and through means that defiles the image of God in them. Uncertain riches are riches acquired by extortion, oppression and spilling of human blood. Is it only those that use virgins and human heads as sacrifices to make money that are evil? What about those who over labour their workers and employees with little or nothing for them to show for it. To me, they are equally guilty of the same offence as those who kill to make wealth. The only difference is that the first spilled blood and life is ended immediately, while the other have his sacrifice in the form of employees, drying up their blood within in hard work, until they eventually die from work stress. Then, another sacrificial employee is sought to continue the wickedness. If we make riches by the help of God, we will also learn to be humble and respectful. As we discussed in yesterday's devotional, there is need for us as confessors of the testament of the Lord, to avoid uncertain riches. A word of caution from scripture is here in Proverbs 23:4-5, "Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven." To me, building relationships is more important than the profit I am going to make from business dealings. You see – make it "relationship first" in all that you do. We win souls by building godly relationships. We attract others to God, when they see the working of God in us – not necessarily because we are rich, but because they can relate with the attributes of

God in us. Unbelievers are watching us. As we studied earlier on the 22 of this month, the Lord was so concerned that His children were imbibing corruption as a way of life, that he promised to reveal himself in them by given them a pure language – Zech. 3:9. Once they are purged, blessings will follow as confirmed in Zechariah 8:23, and those who once corrupted them will now follow them to serve the Lord. Money was not created by God, hence its value fades away with time. Sorrow also comes when we can no longer spend as much as we used to. This is why scripture says in Ecclesiastes 5:13-14, "...riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand." He can't even feed his own child. Is it right for the children of God to be rich? Yes, we can have "certain" riches – the kind of riches that we can feel and hold with our hands, yet we will not experience sorrow (Prov.10:22).

**Faith confession:** Lord – I understand that you can make me rich by giving me the kind of wealth that will not lead my soul to everlasting destruction. I am willing to wait on your timing for my breakthrough.

**Let us pray:** Oh Lord! I pray that you guide my heart not to follow riches that will become a snare for my soul. Let me not be counted with the wicked. Let it be that through me, you are able to win souls. Amen!

**Meditation:** Exodus 21:16, Proverbs 28:22



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# The Importance of the Night

*Thou hast proved mine heart; thou  
hast visited me in the night... Psalms 17:3*



In today's devotional, we shall be discussing the importance of the night to our relationship with the realm of God. As we can see from the anchor verse above, the psalmist says that God visited him in the night. You must have read that Jacob wrestled in the night with the powers of the night (Genesis 32:24-28). The following are some of the reasons why you will not want to waste this night on frivolities. First, God searches our hearts in the night. While we are praying or sleeping, God is right there searching our hearts to see if there is any reason to answer our prayers. This is evident in the anchor verse above - "Thou hast proved mine heart..." Second, it is an opportunity to see the likeness of our Lord. I have had the opportunity to see God's throne and His likeness in my dreams. In one occasion I met Jesus Christ face to face and in another I saw Moses with a staff in his hand standing on mount Horeb, the mountain of God. This kind of revelation is possible in most cases during the night in our dreams. In Genesis 28:10-13, Jacob saw the Angels of God climbing up and down a ladder. Third, it is also a time when God fights our battles. While we are sleeping and resting, God takes charge of our burden. Scripture says in Psalms 121:4-6, "Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night." This is why Jesus Christ said we should handover our burden to Him in Matthew 11:28, so that we can have rest. Why don't you come over to Jesus and tell Him "Lord take over my burden, You are my lord and

saviour, my heart will continually trust in You." Say it with your heart and He will come to your rescue. Fourth, we also receive His promise and reassurance of His faithfulness. When we are confused about, and become doubtful of God's faithfulness, all we need to do is go on our knees and commune with Him and in the night, He will show up to reaffirm His promises to us. Fifth, the night is also a time to hear God speak to us. I have heard Him speak to me clearly at night while I sleep or lay quietly on my bed. He will speak to you this night, just tune yourself and you will hear Him. In some cases, He uses the voices and faces of His servants who shepherds you to speak to you. Sixth, the reason He speaks to you is to give you instructions, and this can happen in our dreams at night on what to do to achieve success. Just hold on, that instruction to change your destiny is coming your way and God is releasing it to you this night. Listen, you will hear Him - Isaiah 30:21. Your deliverance is just ahead, this night.

**Faith confession:** Lord – I believe that I can win my battles in the night for people to see my testimonies at dawn. The night is the most important time in the life of a believer when spiritual powers gather.

**Let us pray:** Oh Lord! This is my night. I can see my deliverance right in front of me. I grab this opportunity to shine. Let your infinite mercy and grace direct me this night. Amen!

**Meditation:** Genesis 28:10-13; Genesis 26:24-25; 1 Samuel 3:3-8; 1 Kings 3:5; Acts 23:11

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# Fate of Leadership 1: Accepted by Man, Rejected by God

*...because thou hast rejected knowledge,  
I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me...Hosea 4:6*



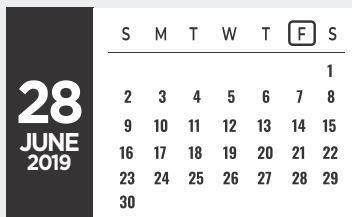
**T**oday's devotional is important as it is aimed at encouraging leaders and anyone who is charged with a responsibility to man the position of authority. The crowd might accept anyone in authority because they have no alternative, but God does not work like that. This is the fate of all false prophets. The people who run after signs and wonders easily accept these sets of money-making prophets, unaware that they are rejected by God. Also, in governance this can be experienced as it happened to King Saul. The people still saw him as their king; meanwhile, God had already anointed David to take over His place. The same goes with Eli at Shiloh. Though, the people complained of the atrocities of his sons, but he was not ousted out of office - his presence in that office was not welcomed by God any longer until God raised Samuel in his stead. Absalom proclaimed himself king, supported by a great multitude of people, yet was he accepted by God (2 Samuel 15:6-14). Many political leaders who rule as governors, presidents, etc, are also not in good standing with God, hence the people they lead are grumbling under the weight of deprivation. This has happened in many nations of the world, yet it is blamed on economic and political policies. These leaders are dictators and have no fear of God in them. Those they lead are hungry in the midst of plenty, and their acts makes God visit the nations with pestilence and untold calamities. Those they claim to lead have no attachment to their ideals and vision, but they force themselves to be accepted. When they visit the populace for campaigns, people are paid to attend and to transport them to the arena

where the meeting will be held. This happened recently in Nigeria, during the last elections. What a shame! The painful part is that these same people who were bribed to elect these glutton-laden leaders will still have the face to meet God to help them out of their need and wants. These rejected leaders by God rely mostly on the media for selfish egotistic political propaganda. This can also happen even in the church. Many claiming to have been called by God are only there to satisfy their needs and wants, because they see the church as a means of employment when all attempts to get a well-paid job outside have failed. In these churches, their messages are corrupted by unending fund-raising appeals, while neglecting the main purpose of the calling, which is to preach repentance and teaching the congregants how to receive the spirit of God for the renewal of the mind.

**Faith confession:** Lord – you reject people because they hate your knowledge. Those you have rejected hardly make ends meet. Those you bless experiences grace and favour from men and from your throne.

**Let us pray:** Dear Lord – fill me continuously with your knowledge. I pray that you accept my person and my service unto you all the days of my life. Shower me with your favour through your angels. Let me receive help from those you have also blessed. Amen!

**Meditation:** 1 Samuel 15:22-23; 2 Kings 17:19-23; Lamentations 5:16-18; Ezekiel 21:26-27



## The Fate of Leadership 2: Rejected by Man, Accepted by God

*And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall  
receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. 1 Peter 5:4*

Several, most of the people that are accepted by the larger crowd, are those who God has rejected, while those rejected by the crowd are those that God has accepted. While Jesus was on the cross, those categories of people He had healed earlier even came to mock Him, as recounted in Mark 14:65, "And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophesy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands." Did you see that, the servants even had the guts to strike Jesus? Yet, these were the same people whom He defended with His gospel. They will accept those who oppress them and steal their destiny from them by providing them with food yet hate those that genuinely want their divine freedom from perpetual want and slavery. We have another clear example of this when the Bible says that Jesus went into His own and His own rejected Him. John 1:10-12: "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name..." This was why He was unable to achieve much in His own home town. Even at the upper room, with all the display of power and miracles, was it not only 120 that waited for the Holy Ghost He promised them? And, this is mainly the fate of God-raised leaders. The people reject them because they carry with them a whip of righteousness aimed at correcting the evil in society. The Bible says in John 3:19-20, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light,

because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." The multitudes of evil in society are caused by evil people and they are readily seen within the corridors of power, which they hold on to, so as to remain relevant in the eyes of the people. But it is easy for the oppressed to know a God-chosen leader as he can vouch for the presence of God in whatever he or she does. Here is what God says concerning the King of Judah who repented and tore his clothes on hearing the words of the Laws of Moses, in 2 Chronicles 34:27 "Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard thee also, saith the Lord."

**Faith confession:** Lord – I understand that the crowd usually go after those who can give them what they want. I will never follow the crowd, but to observe every association I have with people to ensure I am not walking with evil minded people.

**Let us pray:** Lord! help me to identify those you are working with. Open my eyes so that I will not follow the crowd to disobey and hate you, but that I should consider your instructions daily. Amen!

**Meditation:** Proverbs 18:5-10; Jeremiah 14:10-16; Numbers 21:5-6



## The Fate of Leadership 3: Accepted by Man, Accepted by God

*... the people said, God save king Solomon. ... and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy... 1 King 1:39-40*

Can this ever be? That someone, a leader or any one in position of authority, even in the church is accepted by the people and accepted by God? Yet, this is the platform upon which peace and tranquillity will thrive between humanity and the purpose of heaven. Jesus prayed that the kingdom of God must come so that we can do His will on earth (Matt. 6:10). This is the bone of contention. Will man ever want to do the will of God, especially now that we preach the message of religious tolerance, that both idol worshippers are equally accepted to call upon the names of their idols. How can the society be cleansed of immorality, killings, stealing, human theft and trafficking, etc. It is a difficult thing for God to accept a leader that will not stand for righteousness. So, we are back to the fact that God will definitely avoid our institutions of governance and, even the church where sanctity is not upheld. A verse of the Bible that defines this platform of leadership acceptability is Proverbs 29:2: 'When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.' Although this is a rare occurrence, which soon degenerates into any of the two discussed earlier, as even Solomon failed God in the end. This opens up several questions. The first is if a leader can be righteous without wholehearted service unto God. The second, is if the people are truly interested in the choice of God. A week before Jesus' crucifixion, He was accepted by the people with a hosanna song, especially after feeding them in John 6:1-15. But these same people accused him of insolent

behaviour and made up their mind to do away with Him. To tell us the gravity of their decision, see what Jesus said in Luke 23:28-30, "But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us." The Bible commended King David in 2 Samuel 8:15: 'And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people.' Though David was widely accepted, his own son wanted him dead (2 Samuel 15:13-14). The Doctrine of Acceptability opined that for one to lead successfully, he/she must be accepted by God and also accepted by the people.

**Faith confession:** Lord, from all I have studied concerning the acceptability of those who must lead your nation, I have found the reason why the nations are suffering because it is hard to find a leader and a nation that will wholeheartedly serve you.

**Let us pray:** Lord – preserve me in your mercy and grace. Justify me with your righteousness, and let my life be cast upon your virtues. Hold my hand and lead me through the path of your glory. Amen!

**Meditation:** Psalms 21:1-13; John 6:22-60



# This is the Wind of Change!

*Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel;  
I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit,  
which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go. Isaiah 48:17*



**B**efore the anchor verse above, from Isaiah 48:6, God said – “Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare it? I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them,” God revealed to the prophet the reason He called Him to warn the people against their wickedness towards Him. It was because He was set to bless them, but their sins were an abomination before Him. This was the essence of the entire past 47 chapters of the book of Isaiah. God was demonstrating His lovingkindness, but the people saw it as anger. Scripture says, “For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom He receives (Heb. 12:6). Are you getting fed up with your service to God? You are the change this nation is waiting to manifest. Humans are the resources for change. We have to see it that way. We blame the government. We blame pastors. We blame every one who leads. The truth is that we can start some where. Until we accept to change inwardly by yielding to the dictates of God, can there be anything like change? We already know there are multitudes of problems in society, in the church, and in our families. We can start now. There is still time to make amends. The opportunity to be that change the world is praying for is now. Study the change needed, understand the situation surrounding the change anticipated. Then, pray for God to empower you to become a change bearer. You need the charisma and energy to move the people to believe in the change you are coming with. Wives, this is your

chance to uphold the values of God in your marriage. Husbands, your time to shine for God is now – to lead your family with the love and fear of God. Preachers and teachers of the gospel of truth and righteousness, you can still win souls to God - it is not too late! Scripture says again in Romans 8:19, “For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.” You see that? You must shine. Really! God does not listen to excuses. God is waiting for you – do not keep Him waiting in vain for too long. There is earnest reward ahead if you will succumb. Moses complained, it only made God angry (Exodus 4:14). Jeremiah complained, God told him to go ahead (Jeremiah 1:6-7). God has found you – and, there is no going back (1 Corinthians 1:28). Until we meet in July, I leave you in the hands of the giver of grace and glory – our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Peace!

**Faith confession:** I refuse to be left behind. I am ready – Lord, send me into the field, for I know that the harvest is plenty, and you need labourers now. I give myself away, so that you can use me for your glory.

**Let us pray:** Dear God, help me to become the change you want for the world. Let my character reflect your person in me. Show me your loving-kindness and let your love distinguish me exceedingly. Amen!

**Meditation:** Psalms 23:1-6

NOTE

[illegible]

NOTE

[illegible]



# Covenant Confession

If you are not born again, you may have studied this devotional as literary material and will not receive the spirit therein. You can make a decision to correct that now by saying this covenant confession:

Lord Jesus, I know now that you died for my sins. I believe and confess you as my Lord and Saviour. Please come into my life and dwell inside me.

If you just said this confession, you should locate a spirit-filled church to join in fellowship with them – let the pastor know you just gave your life to Christ and you will be directed on what to do next. Salvation is a personal race and you must be serious with it.

You can also call us through the numbers below:

**+2348076190064; +234-8086737791.**

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- 
- A total transformation in the way you Think and Act
    - Understanding the basics of the Christian life
  - How to Exist as sons of God
  - How to Manifest the true Nature of God
  - Total Freedom from satanic maneuvers
  - How to make Heaven

# About the Author

Pastor Oghenethoja Umuteme encountered God the day he was baptised at St Stephen's Anglican Church, Owhelogbo Delta State, when he received a warm feeling in his heart as he confessed the Lord Jesus as His lord and personal saviour. His birth was surrounded with mysteries – he was born to a mother who had been barren for eight years. There was hardly anything he said that did not come to pass as he was growing. In 1994 he had a dream in which he received an orange which contained a bible with a red cover. Events continued dramatically until he started hearing voices telling him to go for rescue, as many souls were heading for destruction. Then it became clear to him that he was being called to carry out the task of restoring mankind back to Jesus.

In January 2006, he heard a voice telling him to read Isaiah 42. On



reading to verse 6, he felt a deep force within him and started trembling and a voice said - 'I have called you.' As he read further

he was getting immersed in the spirit of God and when he read verse 22, the voice said, 'this is your task.' Then on the 13th of October 2008, he heard a voice while driving: 'Service starts in your house on Sunday.' Events happened that were beyond his understanding and on Sunday 19th October 2008, the first public worship service came to pass.

He is trained at Rivers State University, Nigeria; Robert Gordon University, UK; UNICAF University, Cyprus; Nations University, USA; and TGSAT, India; leading to academic degree certificates in engineering, organisational psychology, divinity and theology. He has over 11 years' work experience as an engineer, growing to the position of Engineering Design Lead in the oil and gas industry, and equally has a rich curriculum vitae that covers trainings and experiences in other works of life, such as human resources management, marketing management, legal studies, alternative dispute resolution, etc. Pastor Oghenethoja Umuteme is married to Pastor(Mrs.) Umuteme Adokiye Obele, who supports him in the call of God upon his life, and their marriage is blessed with children.